

Message Text

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AMEMBASSY ANKARA
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AMEMBASSY OSLO
AMEMBASSY OTTAWA
AMEMBASSY PARIS
AMEMBASSY REYKJAVIK
AMEMBASSY ROME
USCINCEUR
CINCUSAREUR
CINCUSNAVEUR
CINCUSAFE
CINCLANT
USDOCOSOUTH
USNMR SHAPE
SECDEF WASHDC

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SUBJECT: SPAIN AND NATO--SPANISH BRIEFED ON NAC AND DPC;
PRESS REACTION

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(DTG 101727Z DEC 76)

1. THE TRADITIONAL BRIEFING OF THE GOS AFTER SEMIANNUAL NATO MINISTERIALS WAS PARTICULARLY USEFUL AT THIS TIME OF HIGH INTEREST HERE IN THE SPANISH RELATIONSHIP TO THE ALLIANCE. THE BRIEFINGS ON DEC 13 AND 10, RESPECTIVELY, BY ASST. SECY. HARTMAN (NAC) AND BY DASD GLITMAN TOGETHER WITH USNATO DEFENSE ADVISOR LEGERE (DPC) WERE WELL ATTENDED BY SENIOR FOREIGN MINISTRY AND MILITARY OFFICIALS AND WERE VERY WELL RECEIVED. THE FOREIGN MINISTRY ANNOUNCED THE VISITS TO THE PRESS, AND THE PALACE ALSO LET IT BE KNOWN PUBLICLY THAT ASST. SECY. HARTMAN HAD SEEN THE KING ON THE 13TH.

2. WHILE THE QUESTIONS ASKED THE BRIEFERS MAY HAVE UNDERLINED THE DISTANCE THAT STILL SEPARATES SPAIN FROM THE MAINSTREAM OF EAST-WEST ISSUES, THE HIGH LEVEL OF INTEREST BY GOS OFFICIALS AND THE QUANTITY OF SPANISH PRESS ATTENTION TO THE MINISTERIALS REFLECT AWARENESS IN SPAIN THAT THE ISSUE OF SPAIN'S RELATIONSHIP TO NATO MAY BECOME ONE REQUIRING DIFFICULT DECISIONS BEFORE THE END OF THE COMING YEAR.

3. AS INDICATED IN REFTELS, SPANISH PRESS REPORTING ON THE TWO MINISTERIALS WAS AMPLE. IT CLEARLY EXAGGERATED BOTH THE AMOUNT OF ATTENTION DEVOTED TO SPAIN BY THE MINISTERS AND THE EXTENT OF THE U.S. EFFORT TO GET THE MINISTERS TO TREAT THE SPANISH QUESTION. IT ALSO, THEREFORE, ARRIVED AT AN EXAGGERATED CONCLUSION: THAT A REAL AND SIGNIFICANT CHANGE OF ALLIED OPINION WAS REGISTERED ON THIS OCCASION. TODAY'S "YA" (MADRID-BASED LIBERAL CATHOLIC DAILY), FOR EXAMPLE, EDITORIALIZED: "IN FACT, AT THIS JUNCTURE THE ATLANTIC ALLIANCE IS DISPOSED TO RECEIVE (ADMITIR) THE SPANISH APPLICATION FOR MEMBERSHIP."

4. THE CONSIDERABLE SPANISH PRESS REPORTING AND THE FEW EDITORIAL COMMENTS (OTHER MORE PRESSING DOMESTIC POLITICAL QUESTIONS DOMINATE THE EDITORIAL PAGES AT THIS MOMENT) ALSO TAKE THE LINE IN ONE WAY OR ANOTHER THAT A SPANISH DECISION SHOULD NOT BE MADE BEFORE PARLIAMENTARY ELECTIONS AND WILL NOT BE AN EASY OR AUTOMATIC ONE. AMONG THE PROS AND CONS PRESENTED(MORE THE LATTER THAN THE FORMER, AND NONE NEW), WE NOTE IN PARTICULAR SOMETHING OF A SURGE OF MENTIONS OF THE GIBRALTAR SITUATION AS AN OBSTACLE TO BE LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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REMOVED BEFORE SPAIN COULD JOIN THE ALLIANCE. PERHAPS THE MOST UPBEAT COMMENT OF ALL (IN THE SAME "YA" EDITORIAL) IS ONE THAT BREAKS THE LONG TRADITION HERE OF BELIEF THAT EC MEMBERSHIP SHOULD BE DEALT WITH BEFORE NATO MEMBERSHIP. APPARENTLY REFLECTING A GROWING SENSE OF AWARENESS OF THE DIFFICULTIES AHEAD WITH EC ENTRY NEGOTIATIONS, "YA" SUGGESTS THAT "FULL PARTICIPATION BY SPAIN IN THE ALLIANCE WOULD APPARENTLY BE A GREAT STEP TOWARD INTEGRATION IN THE EEC.

THE DIRECT DEALINGS WITH THOSE GOVTS, WHICH ARE PRACTICALLY
THE SAME IN BOTH ORGANIZATIONS, WOULD DO AWAY WITH MANY POLITICAL
SCRUPLES..." STABLER

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